

August 8, 1958.

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover,  
Federal Bureau of Investigation,  
Washington, D. C.

~~EXP. PROC.~~

AUG 14 1958

Dear Mr. Hoover:

On July 28, 1958, I was interviewed by a representative of the F.B.I. concerning the character and loyalty of [redacted] theoretical physicist Richard Phillips Feynman, who is being considered for the position of Science Advisor to President Eisenhower. Although I know that a sincere effort was made to prepare a careful report on the information which I gave, I feel that Richard Feynman's personality and character and the pattern of his activities are sufficiently complex that it is impossible in a single interview to gain an understanding of this man that is at all accurate. Since I do not express myself well orally, I have prepared the enclosed report in the interest of completeness and accuracy and because I do not wish to be misquoted or misunderstood in this matter.

Each statement that I am making in this letter and in the enclosed report is absolutely true to the best of my knowledge, and each statement of my opinion that I am making here is my sincere conviction. I would swear to these things on a Bible, in a court, or before President Eisenhower.

The position of Science Advisor to the President is of vital importance for the security of the American people. It is imperative that a man be placed in this position whose character and loyalty are completely above reproach. I am making this report because I sincerely believe it is my patriotic duty to my country. I therefore intend to say exactly what I believe; I will not mince words.

I do not know--but I believe that Richard Feynman is either a Communist or very strongly pro-Communist--and as such is a very definite security risk. This man is, in my opinion, an extremely complex and dangerous person, and a very dangerous person to have in a position of public trust, particularly a position that so vitally affects the safety and welfare of this nation--both present and future--as that of Science Advisor to President Eisenhower.

I believe that this man is a master of deception, and that his greatest talent lies in intrigue, not in physics. In matters of intrigue Richard Feynman is, I believe, immensely clever--indeed a genius--and he is, I further believe, completely ruthless, unhampered by morals, ethics, or religion--and will stop at absolutely nothing to achieve his ends. He seldom makes a miss step. He does not expend words or effort unnecessarily. Statements and acts spoken or performed casually often seem to have been planted for a purpose in the light of subsequent events. I am convinced that this man is willing to spend unlimited time--months, even years--in setting a stage for action--making close friends of key persons, studying personalities, preparing attitudes and ideas in people's minds, accumulating useful information, and establishing convincing patterns of conduct for himself that seem casual and every day--in order that nothing will interfere with his activities or objectives and in order that he will never be suspected. Once the ground is laid, judging by the patterns of action that I have seen, he will, I am

- 1 -

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convinced, play the game to the hilt, with unbelievable daring, making full use of the personality traits of persons involved in the drama, even to the extent of inducing persons unwittingly to work against themselves or to aid in the deception. So far as I can determine and from my own experience, he appears to do this so flawlessly that he stays on good terms with the person or persons deceived and is thus able to continue his activities for a long period of time. I believe that he has repeatedly carried on deceptions in which he has completely escaped detection--or, in any case, has avoided public exposure.

My conviction that this man is not a loyal citizen rests on a series of details which I have set forth in the enclosed account entitled Evidence of Disloyalty. Some of these considerations have been known to the F.B.I. for a long time, I feel quite sure. Nevertheless, I should like to ask you briefly to reconsider one or two of these: the matters of Richard Feynman's opening safes and picking locks and of receiving and sending letters in code while he was employed as a scientist at Los Alamos, New Mexico, during the years 1942-45 (or 1943-45) when the atomic bomb was in preparation. (I am not quite sure of the date when he first went to Los Alamos, [redacted]) It seems to me a curious thing that in each account which he gives to the press he never fails to mention the matter of picking locks and/or opening safes, b7C and in most interviews he also mentions sending messages in code and that he knew b7D [redacted] (See reference to specific sources in Evidence of Disloyalty.) I believe that mention of these activities indicates more than mere eccentricity. [redacted]

[redacted] I cannot but feel each time I see references to his skill in lock picking, letters in code, and [redacted] that the mention of these things could well be a means of hiding them in plain sight and thus avoiding any further scrutiny of these matters, the assumption being that if a man tells things like this about himself surely there be nothing of negative importance to conceal in these activities. He once remarked that he was "almost a Communist when he was at Los Alamos". According to his own statement, he carried on the activities of opening locks and deciphering code only "for fun" while he was at Los Alamos and he said that he had no further interest in these activities after leaving there. It has, after all, been thirteen years since he was at Los Alamos. If he really has no further interest in these activities and if he really has nothing to conceal, the repeated mention of them to the press is to say the least a bit strained.

[redacted] b7C b7D

Communitistic tendencies in high places in our government. In seeing Richard Feynman's name proposed as Scientific Advisor to the President, I can only say that I am convinced that over a long period he has carefully maneuvered himself into the public

eye (since he makes a point of cultivating members of the press and influential persons in the scientific world) and that he has in all probability been cleverly manipulated into line for this position by other persons. I cannot but feel that if Richard Feynman is appointed to the position of Science Advisor to the President that a situation as dangerous as that which existed when William D. White was in office might well recur and perhaps go undetected for years.

If Richard Feynman should be appointed Science Advisor to the President and if he should choose to obtain secrets and transmit them to the Russians or wish otherwise to influence national policy in a negative manner, it may be of interest to consider some of the special abilities and associations which he might draw upon in approaching such a problem:

- 1) Technical ability to evaluate scientific data.
- 2) Experience in opening safes and in picking locks of various kinds.
- 3) Experience in devising and deciphering code messages.
- 4) Experience in film-developing techniques and photography.

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- 6) Experience in formulating and laying the groundwork for complex patterns of activity that extend well into the future.

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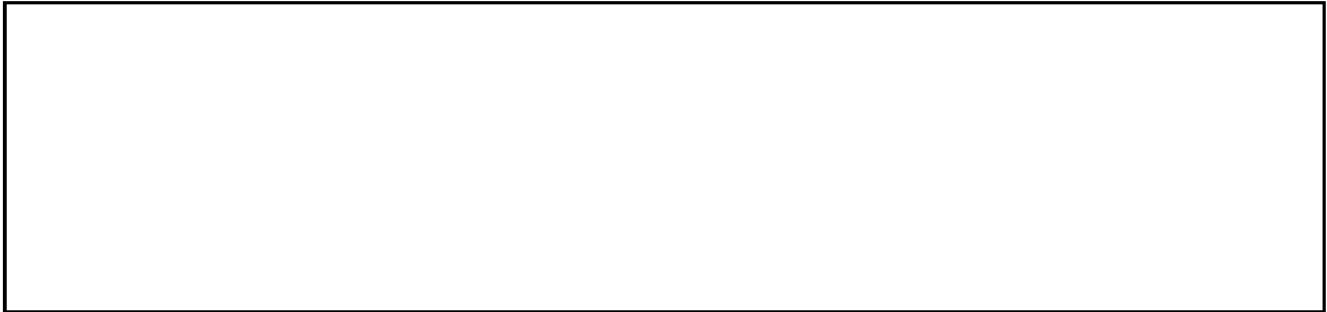
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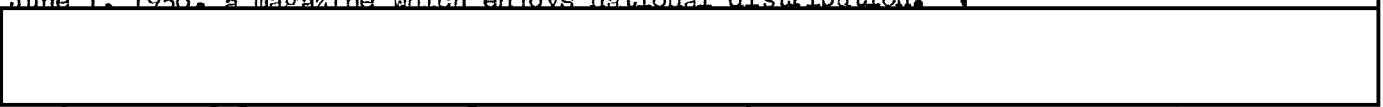
- 10) Unusual ability to influence people and to induce them to believe whatever he wishes them to believe about himself and his activities or about ideas he wishes to impress upon them.

- 11) A practical aptitude for dealing with mechanical and electronic devices; possession of certain equipment such as a wire recorder and photographic equipment.

(See detailed comment on each of the above considerations under Evidence of Disloyalty and Personality and Character.)



which he had always been bitter). Immediately thereafter he prepared and delivered a lecture on science and religion, which made him appear to be a very religious man, and had this published in the California Institute of Technology Magazine dated June 1, 1956, a magazine which enjoys national distribution. [REDACTED]



detail of which documented proof can be easily obtained. (See Character and Personality, "Property Fraud".)

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Many of Richard Feynman's friends are extremely anti-Republican (some of them very far left in their political thinking from my point of view) and agnostic. These persons often bitterly criticized and made fun of religion and religious persons, and they also criticized and made fun of the Republican party and individual Republicans, including the President. I have many times heard Richard Feynman actively participate in these group attacks on religion and on Republicans. [REDACTED]

Republican party and often viciously attacked many of the policies and issues it sponsored. He has many times expressed dislike and contempt for Richard Nixon and for John Foster Dulles, and he has criticized President Eisenhower as a person and for his policies, both domestic and foreign. More than once he has spoken of President Eisenhower with great contempt because he is a religious man and because he has focused the attention of the public on religion.



But I am also convinced that after his long hatred of Republicans and religion that he assumed membership in the Republican party and the surface appearance of being a religious man in large part for another purpose: to make himself more acceptable to the Eisenhower organization and to lay the ground for an attempt to obtain high office under the Republican administration. This was two years ago. Two years is, I believe, not too long a time for Richard Feynman to spend in preparing the field for obtaining such a prize as the position of Science Advisor to the President or other high scientific position under the Republican administration.

If this man is not a loyal citizen, he is extremely dangerous from the standpoint that he possesses an unusual personal magnetism which enables him to charm or fascinate individual persons or groups if he chooses to do so and to convince them of whatever he wishes them to believe about himself or about the ideas which he wishes to present. He often talks of what a good man he is, and makes subtle references to his own loyalty and sense of honor. To his professional friends and to persons who can somehow be useful to him he tries very hard to appear to be a paragon of morality and integrity--

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (See detailed accounts under Character and Personality.) He is a superb showman and he counts heavily, I believe, on his reputation of being funny and on his disarming, boyish manner to cover activities he does not want the world to know. And he apparently deliberately seems to cultivate the appearance of being careless, happy-go-lucky, and absent-minded for a number of reasons --in part, it would seem, because these are effective devices for keeping people from looking beneath the surface--and because they make more acceptable the fact that he often breaks his word.

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[REDACTED]

Richard Feynman has for years, I believe made a very carefully calculated effort to cultivate persons who are eminent in the scientific field, both in the United States and abroad. This includes scientists whom he first knew at Los Alamos-- Robert Oppenheimer, [REDACTED]--and scientists whom he made an effort to know because of their prominence in the field--Albert Einstein, Enrico Fermi-- now dead. He has made good use of these associations. Through the years that he has been at the California Institute of Technology [REDACTED] [REDACTED] he has in my opinion made a definite point of knowing b7C well and cultivating such persons as the president of California Institute of Technology, the dean of the school of physics, department heads (including [REDACTED] b7D [REDACTED] and Linus Pauling), regents of California Institute of Technology, as well as [REDACTED]. He also made it a point to know members of the press. This cultivation of important persons was carried to the extreme [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

There is no question that in being considered for the position of Science Advisor to the President he will be backed by fine recommendations from persons prominent in the scientific world. Richard Feynman is protected from negative criticism by the fact that since receiving the Einstein award in 1954 he is well known in the physics field. Even if certain other physicists know things that may be negative about his character or activities, they would, I feel sure, hesitate to criticize him for fear of jeopardizing their own positions or professional future. If Richard Feynman should be disloyal, he would be protected by persons whose own loyalties may be questionable --and this would be a further reason why loyal scientists might hesitate to participate in the matter. He would also be protected by the fact that the physics world is like a great fraternity in which men stand together merely because of their profession--a consideration which in my opinion hindered the Oppenheimer investigation. Some of the persons in this group are so very liberal in their political thinking, from my point of view, that it is sometimes very difficult in hearing them express their ideas on political subjects to believe that they are loyal to the United States.

Richard Feynman is now registered as a Republican. [REDACTED]

[redacted]

purpose of obtaining a position under the Republican administration. Among the most politically conservative of physicists, or other scientists, I will venture to say that there are probably very few who are registered as Republicans. Yet I am sure that there are many of these persons who are registered as Democrats who are much closer to the Republican point of view and who have the interest of the nation--as compared with their own personal interest--much more at heart than does Richard Feynman. (See Evidence of Disloyalty.) Any physicist or other scientist who registers as a Republican automatically stands out from the group; I am sure Richard Feynman was very much aware of this when he changed his political party affiliation from Independent Progressive to Republican in the spring of 1956. If political party affiliation has been an important factor in selecting Richard Feynman for consideration for this vital advisorship to the President, this is very unfortunate indeed--and in all probability will result in exactly the opposite of the desired effect.

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There are many able and eminent physicists in the United States, men who are older and more seasoned, but still young--persons who possess no pattern of emotional instability, persons who have no questionable background of having picked locks and opened safes while employed in a post like Los Alamos where security was of the essence, persons who are holders of the Nobel Prize--an honor of infinitely greater importance than the Einstein award--and many other honors and who are the originators of many tangible achievements in physics--such as the synchrotron and cyclotron, persons whose loyalty and irreproachable character can surely be easily established without question of doubt. Some of these persons are practical physicists--with a very thorough knowledge of creative as well as theoretical physics and of the scientific world--not mere mathematicians as is the case of theoretical physicists. I have in mind such persons as [redacted]

[redacted]

Technology, to mention only a few. Are persons like these also being considered for the position of Science Advisor to the President? If not, why not? Why is a person like Richard Feynman, who was relatively unknown until he received the Einstein award in 1954 and who has never directed any large scientific project, given precedence over persons of this caliber? The deep underlying answer to this question may well be of great significance to the safety of America and of the American people.

I have prepared the material which I am submitting for your consideration in two sections--one section entitled Evidence of Disloyalty and one section entitled Character and Personality. Since it seems to me that time is of the essence, I am enclosing Evidence of Disloyalty with this letter, but I have not at this writing had time fully to prepare the second section of the report. You will notice in this letter and in the enclosed section of the report a number of references to the section entitled Character and Personality since this report contains detailed information which it seems to me the President of the United States and the F.B.I. should know about Richard Feynman if he is being considered for high public office and which I believe should be a part of the record in the interest of national security. The section entitled Character and Personality will be accompanied by certain photostated material that may be of interest and that I feel should also be a part of the record. I will of course try to submit the second section of the report as soon as possible. Headings

- 8 -

under which information is presented in the section of the report entitled Character and Personality speak for themselves. I believe: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] but I also know that if you are willing carefully to study the material which I am submitting and to follow up many details you will find very much to corroborate that what I say is true.

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[REDACTED]

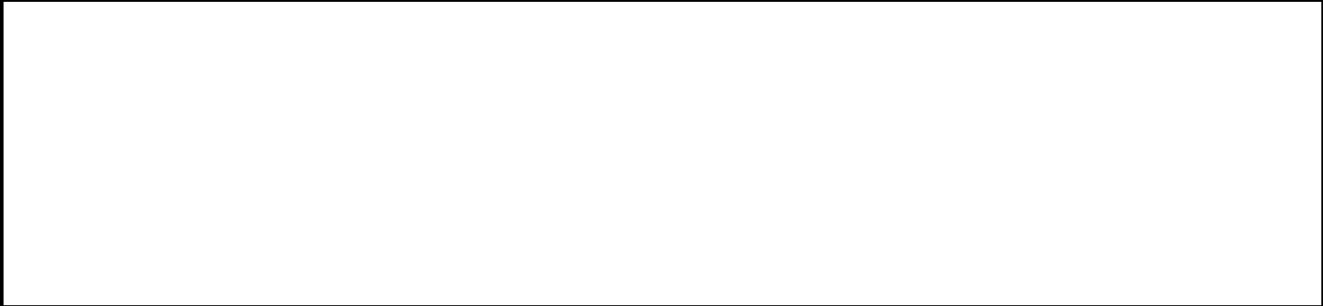
Sincerely,

[REDACTED]



EVIDENCE OF DISLOYALTY


The following information probably adds little to the facts that are already known in a general way by the F.B.I. about Richard Feynman. But a collection of facts sometimes has a value that individual details do not



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Although Richard Feynman's ideas on political subjects were very far left, from my



have led me to this conclusion. I am also submitting a separate report entitled Character and Personality as an important supplement to this report, since many of the ideas presented here are infinitely more meaningful if they are considered with a knowledge of Richard Feynman's very complex personality.

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